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(54) Title: PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING MEALS

(57) **Abstract:** A process for providing a home meal replacement as herein defined, comprising: (i) providing a carrier tray for each meal of the home meal replacement to be served, (ii) introducing the meal into each carrier tray and subjecting the meal to conditions that inhibit microorganism growth and contamination of the meal, the meal consisting of one or more foods that are introduced into each carrier tray at desired positions to simulate a gourmet meal, (iii) freezing the meal in each carrier tray to a temperature that enables the meal to be cold stored until the meal is ready to be served, (iv) providing a serving dish for each carrier tray wherein the serving dish is of a size and shape that corresponds substantially to that of the carrier tray, (v) manipulating each carrier tray in such a way that the frozen meal therein is transferred into its respective serving dish, the meal being presented in its respective serving dish such that the one or more foods are located in the same relative positions as in the respective carrier tray, and (iv) heating or thawing the meal in each serving dish to edible temperature for serving and consumption.

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